

In any dispute the Court will apply international conventions recognized by the contesting parties, international custom, the general principles of law recognized by nations, plus previous highly qualified judicial decisions and teachings as a subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law. All questions are decided by a majority of the judges present, with nine constituting a quorum. The President of the Court has a deciding vote in the event of a tie.

The Court may also be requested to give an advisory opinion on any legal question by either the General Assembly or the Security Council. Other organs or specialized agencies, with authorization from the General Assembly, may request advisory opinions on legal questions within the scope of their activities. The Court is not open to private individuals.

## 6. The Secretariat

An international staff of more than 16,000 men and women carry out the day-to-day administrative work of the United Nations both in the New York Headquarters and in offices and centres around the world. The work is as varied as the list of problems dealt with by the system. Among other duties the staff administers peacekeeping operations, organizes conferences, provides interpretation and translation services, prepares reports, and services the media and the general public with information about the United Nations.

At the head of the Secretariat is the Secretary-General. He is appointed, normally for a five-year term, by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. There have been five Secretaries-General to date. The current Secretary-General is Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar from Peru, and his term of office is scheduled to run until 31 Dec. 1986.

In addition to being the chief administrative officer of the United Nations, the Secretary-General also has an important political function. He may be called upon by the General Assembly, the Security Council, or the other main organs to perform specific functions (eg. mediation). He is also specifically charged under Article 99 of the Charter "to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

There are 17 intergovernmental agencies related to the United Nations by special agreements. All are separate, autonomous organizations with their own memberships, legislative and executive bodies, secretariats and budgets. They work with the United Nations and with each other through the co-ordinating machinery of ECOSOC to which they report annually. Much of the United Nations practical work aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of the people of the world is carried out by or in conjunction with these agencies.

The general structure of each agency follows a fairly common pattern. Each agency has a general conference in which all members are represented. The conference elects an executive body charged with both initiating proposals for and carrying out decisions of the conference. There is a permanent secretariat headed by a director. Many agencies have regional sub-commissions operating in various parts of the world. Some of them were in existence prior to the formation of the United Nations (ILO, UPU, ITU, WMO AND WIPO), some were in the process of establishment during World War II (IBRD and IMF); and the rest have been organized under the auspices of the United Nations since 1945.

Fifteen of the agencies are known as "specialized agencies", a term used in the United Nations Charter. They each report annually to ECOSOC. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is not a specialized agency, but it was established under the aegis of the United Nations and reports to the General Assembly as well as to the Security Council and ECOSOC as appropriate. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a multilateral trade treaty embodying reciprocal rights and obligations. Contracting parties have accepted extensive regulations governing international trade. GATT is regarded as a *de facto* specialized agency but does not have a formal status.

None of the intergovernmental agencies have their headquarters in New York. The Headquarters for the International Civil Aviation Organization are in Montreal. Canada is a member of all of the agencies.

## BUDGET OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The regular programme budget of the United Nations is approved by the General Assembly biennially. This budget covers expenses relating to substantive programmes and programme support plus administrative activities of the Organization. Costs of the peacekeeping forces are not included in the budget but are covered by separate assessments. Many United Nations activities are heavily financed by voluntary contributions outside of the regular budget. The six programmes that rely heavily on voluntary contributions are UNDP, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWRA and UNFPA.

The main source of funds for the regular budget are the contributions of Member States. A scale of assessments is fixed by the General Assembly, normally for a three-year period. The fundamental criterion on which the scale is based is the real capacity to pay of the Member States. The Assembly has fixed a maximum of 25% of the budget for any one contributor and a minimum of 0.01%. The United States is the largest contributor (25%), but 15 members including Canada, make a larger per capita contribution. Canada is currently assessed at a rate of 3.08%.

Contributions to the budgets of the specialized agencies are separate from those to the regular programme budget. Essentially the same scale of assessments generally apply to agency contributions.

## GROUP OF 77

Most of the new Member States to join the United Nations, especially since 1960, have been states which emerged as newly independent out of the old colonial